



NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

Date: January 9, 2018

To: California State Clearinghouse, state Responsible and Trustee Agencies, federal agencies, County Clerks, local jurisdictions, and interested individuals and organizations

Subject: **Notice of Preparation and Public Scoping Meeting for the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Oceano Dunes District Habitat Conservation Plan Joint EA/EIR or Joint EIS/EIR**

Lead Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is Lead Agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the EA or EIS; California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) is Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the EIR.

Applicant: CDPR, Oceano Dunes District, 340 James Way, Ste. 270, Pismo Beach, CA 93449

Project Location: Pismo State Beach, Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area, and Pismo Lake in San Luis Obispo County, California

Project Description: CDPR proposes to prepare a Habitat Conservation Plan and submit an application for an incidental take permit under the federal Endangered Species Act. A brief description of the project, including its location and probable environmental effects, is attached. An Initial Study was not prepared for the project because CDPR has determined that an EIR will be prepared for the project.

The purpose of this Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Public Scoping Meeting is to 1) describe the proposed project (the Project) and possible alternatives; 2) advise other federal and State agencies and the public of CDPR's and the Service's intent to prepare a joint EA/EIR or EIS/EIR; 3) announce the initiation of a 60-day public scoping period; and 4) obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues and alternatives to be included in the EA/EIR or EIS/EIR. Comment is requested from state Responsible and Trustee Agencies, federal agencies, and any other local agency, person, or organization concerned with the environmental effects of the project.

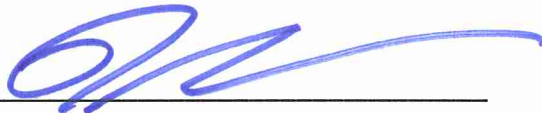
Corresponding with the NOP, a Notice of Intent (NOI) is being issued by the Service for publication in the Federal Register in compliance with Section 1501.7 of NEPA. As provided for under CEQA Guideline 15170, "a lead agency may work with a federal agency to prepare a joint environmental document." The NOI and NOP are being released simultaneously for a 60-day public review period, which commences on January 11, 2018 and ends on March 12, 2018. The NOI and NOP provide parallel opportunities for early agency and public input and comment.

Responses may be to one Notice or the other, but need not be to both. All information and comments received in response to the NOP and NOI must be considered in preparation of the EIS/EA or EIS/EIR as a whole.

Please send your written response by the earliest possible date, but no later than 5 PM on March 12, 2018 to Mr. Ronnie Glick, Senior Environmental Scientist, California Department of Parks and Recreation, Oceano Dunes District, 340 James Way, Ste. 270, Pismo Beach, CA 93449 or to Ronnie.Glick@parks.ca.gov (enter "Oceano Dunes District HCP NOP" in the 'Subject' line). Agency responses should include the name of a contact person at the agency. The Service and CDPR encourage all interested agency representatives, organizations, and individuals to attend the public scoping meeting for the Project's Draft EA/EIR or EIS/EIR:

Wednesday, February 7, 2018
Ramona Garden Park Center
993 Ramona Avenue
Grover Beach, CA 93433
6 PM – 8 PM

Signature: _____



Date: January 9, 2018

Title: Environmental Compliance Manager

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
OCEANO DUNES DISTRICT HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN (HCP)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR), Oceano Dunes District manages Pismo State Beach, Pismo Lake, and Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA). These state park units provide coastal recreation to an estimated two million visitors annually. The parklands are home to multiple wildlife and plant species, some of which are protected under the federal Endangered Species Act (FESA). CDPR implements an ongoing conservation program to manage these special-status species and their habitats. CDPR is preparing an HCP, which is required under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) for issuance of an incidental take permit (ITP).

Project Location and Site Description

The Oceano Dunes District HCP area includes Pismo State Beach, Oceano Dunes SVRA, and Pismo Lake located in San Luis Obispo County, California (Map 1, HCP Area). The HCP area comprises 5,005 acres bounded by the City of Pismo Beach to the north, the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes National Wildlife Refuge to the south, urban and agricultural land to the east, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. Primary access to the area is via U.S. Highway 101 and State Route 1.

Pismo State Beach and Oceano Dunes SVRA comprise approximately 25 percent of the 18-mile linear shoreline of the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes complex, which extends from Pismo Beach south to Point Sal in Santa Barbara County. The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes complex is a relatively intact coastal dune and dune scrub ecosystem varying in width from two to five miles.

Visitors come to enjoy wide-ranging pursuits including off-highway vehicle (OHV) (e.g., 4x4, all-terrain vehicle [ATV], motorcycle, and sandrail) recreation, camping, pedestrian activities, dog-walking, horseback riding, bicycling, golfing, fishing, boating/surfing, and aerial/wind driven activity. To support this high level and diversity of visitation, the Oceano Dunes District has an extensive operational program (Map 2, Land Use Facilities).

Proposed Project

CDPR management and operation of Pismo State Beach, Pismo Lake, and Oceano Dunes SVRA may negatively affect the federally-threatened western snowy plover (*Charadrius nivosus nivosus*) and California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), and the federally-endangered California least tern (*Sternula antillarum browni*), tidewater goby (*Eucyclogobius newberryi*), marsh sandwort (*Arenaria paludicola*), La Graciosa thistle (*Cirsium scariosum* var. *loncholepis*), Nipomo Mesa lupine (*Lupinus nipomensis*), and Gambel's watercress (*Nasturtium [Rorippa] gambelii*), as well as two plant species solely listed under the California Endangered Species Act (surf thistle [*Cirsium rhotophilum*] and beach spectaclepod [*Dithyrea maritima*]).

CDPR proposes the Oceano Dunes District HCP to support its application for a 25-year federal ITP under FESA Section 10(a)(1)(B). Covered activities under this HCP include all lawful activities for which CDPR has responsibility within the covered lands that could result in take of covered species. These activities include, but are not limited to, public use/recreation management,

natural resources management, and park/beach management. The HCP is designed to accommodate recreational use within the covered parks while protecting and benefiting numerous populations of threatened and endangered species occurring within those parks.

CDPR would manage the HCP area for covered species largely in the same manner it has been for over a decade. The management actions include utilizing protective fencing, monitoring, habitat restoration, invasive plant and animal control, habitat monitoring, and water quality monitoring and improvements. The proposed conservation program includes conservation measures (i.e., actions taken to avoid or minimize take, compensate for loss of habitat, or provide for the conservation of covered species) to achieve the biological goals and objectives set forth in the HCP. The measures include avoidance and minimization measures (AMMs), habitat enhancement, habitat restoration, habitat creation, and population enhancement.

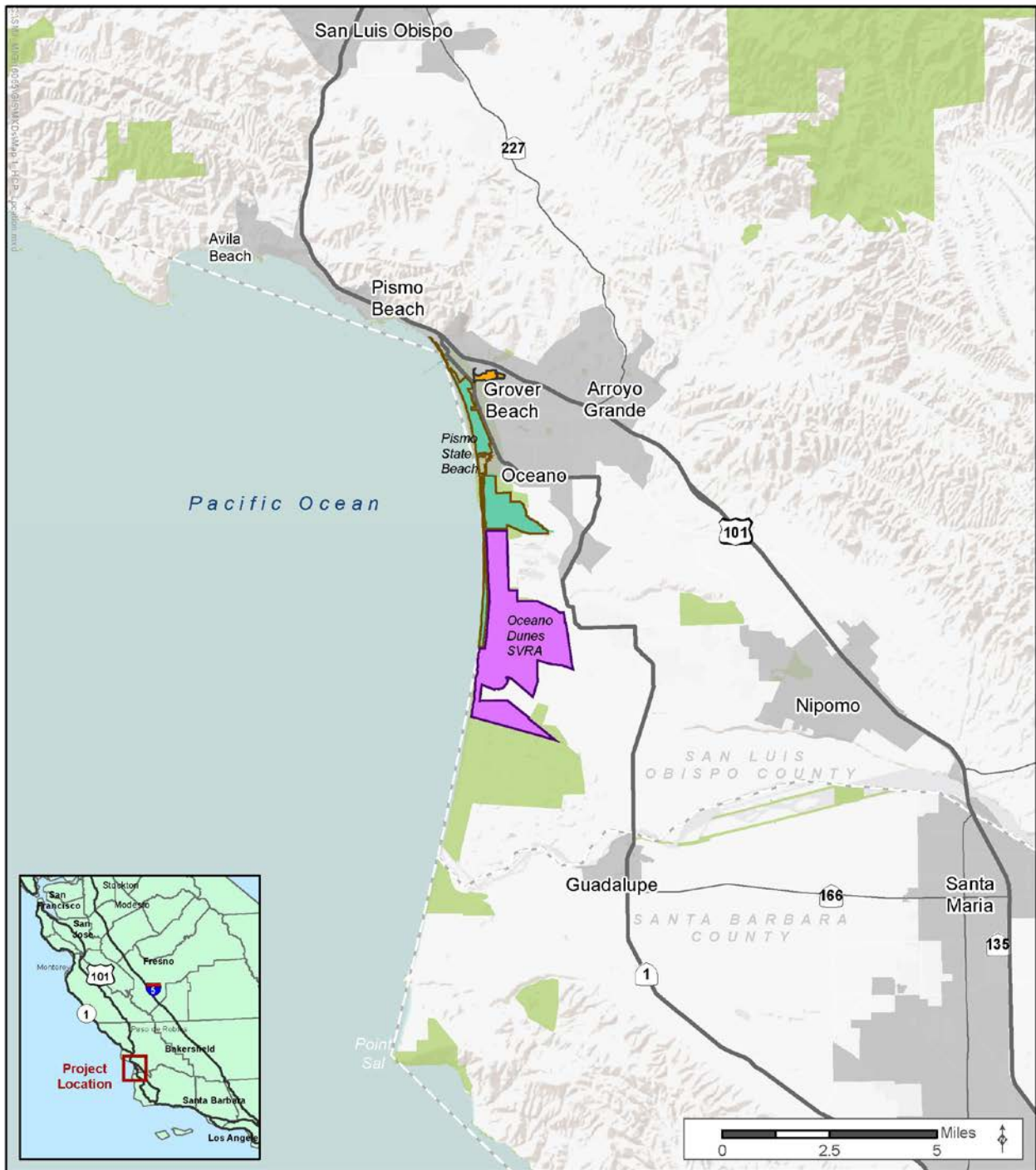
Alternatives

The EA/EIS or EIS/EIR will examine a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project. The alternatives will be defined based on the EA/EIR or EIS/EIR analysis, public scoping meeting, and comments received on the NOP and NOI. A detailed description of the impacts of the proposed action and each alternative will be included in the EA/EIR or EIS/EIR. Several alternatives will be considered and analyzed, representing varying levels of conservation and impacts. A No Action alternative will be included in the analysis of the alternatives considered.

Probable Environmental Effects

The proposed HCP is intended to benefit covered species in the HCP area by protecting and, where appropriate, enhancing their populations. There is potential for the HCP covered activities to result in unintentional take (e.g., harm, harassment, injury, or death, etc.) of covered species, which would be a significant impact. Park management under the HCP may modify the seasonal enclosure fencing to expand recreational access to beach areas currently closed during the western snowy plover and California least tern breeding season. The HCP does not propose changes to daily limits on the number of street legal and OHV vehicles at Pismo State Beach and Oceano Dunes SVRA as established by an existing Coastal Development Permit.

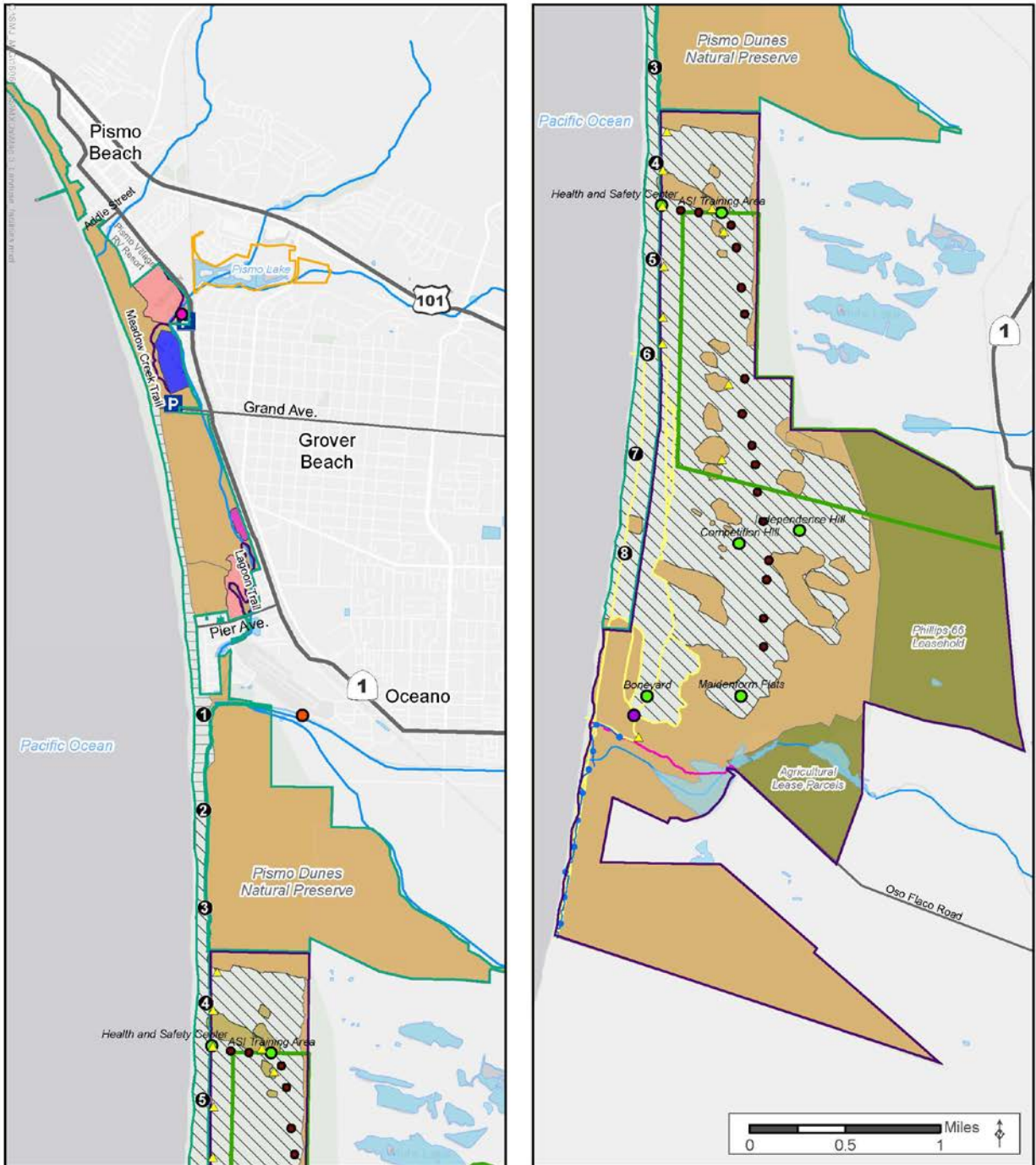
The proposed HCP may have indirect impacts on air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, cultural and tribal resources, and hydrology/water quality. Several areas of potential concern are likely to be found less than significant given the non-developmental nature of the proposed project and minimal change in visitor use and park operations from baseline operations (e.g., aesthetics, hazards, public services, recreation, traffic, and utilities). Other environmental issues may not apply due to the absence of a resource or the nature of the project site (e.g., agricultural/ forestry, mineral resources, and population/housing). The final scope of impact analyses conducted for the EA/EIR or EIS/EIR will be dependent upon the outcomes of the NOP public review process.



- Oceano Dunes SVRA
- Pismo State Beach
- Pismo Lake
- County line
- Urban area
- Other public park land
- Highway
- Major road



Map 1 HCP Area and Vicinity
Oceano Dunes District Habitat Conservation Plan



- | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Oceano Dunes SVRA | Ranger station and yard | 2017 enclosure fence | OHV landmarks |
| Pismo State Beach | Street legal vehicles only | Symbolic fence in South Oso Flaco | Boneyard gate |
| Pismo Lake | Open to riding and camping | Sand highway markers | Guiton crossing |
| Dust control program area | Closed to motorized vehicles | Marker post | Oso Flaco boardwalk |
| Campground | Closed to all public use | Restrooms | Trail |
| Golf course | Waterbody | Monarch butterfly grove | |

Map 2 Oceano Dunes District Land Use and Facilities

Oceano Dunes District Habitat Conservation Plan

